

RUTHERFORD COUNTY MANAGER

County Commissioners

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William Eckler, *Vice Chairman*

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Eddie Holland

Roger Richard

Carl Classen, *County Manager*

Hazel S. Haynes, *Clerk to the Board*

Richard Williams, *County Attorney*

March 30, 2012

To: County Commissioners

From: Carl Classen, County Manager

Weekly Report Items **Week Ending March 30, 2012**

General:

This is a highlight of items from the previous week. It is not meant to be exhaustive but to inform the Commissioners and Department Heads.

Board of Elections:

Over the last week, the Elections staff has received the programming for the Primary election, burned media and began the extensive process of testing the election equipment. The staff is also working to recruit the remaining poll workers. The staff has mailed out 4 absentee ballots by regular mail and 1 ballot to an overseas voter. Also processed this week were 37 new registrations, 7 duplicates, 29 changes of information and 22 voters were removed.

Building Inspections:

The Building Inspections Department has continued preparations for the upcoming code seminars available to all licensed general contractors and mechanical contractors. The Director met with the County Manager and an Airport Authority member regarding upcoming hangar inspections at the airport. Personnel continue to attend continuing education seminars by the NC Building Inspectors Association. This month, 11 new house permits were issued. Also, the Director is in discussion with the Rutherford Health Department regarding potential improvements to the permitting process to increase efficiency and to simplify the process for citizens. Lastly, preliminary discussions with Amer-dial for their upcoming expansion are in progress.

Clerk to the Board:

The Clerk met with the County Manager and Board members to compile information for the next commissioner's meeting. The Clerk continues to provide reports, documents and records to the County Manager and Board.

Cooperative Extension:

The County Extension Director continues to assist clients with technical assistance. The Director also participated in a Rutherford County Livestock Judging Team meeting. The Family and Consumer Sciences staff taught a weight management class, child nutrition class, youth sewing workshop and stress management class. Also, staff conducted a monthly radio program and facilitated childcare provider training workshop.

County Manager:

The County Manager met with Bill Eckler, David Garret, Dana Whitehair and James Kilgo to tour the Landfill and discuss improvements at the Transfer Station and continued development of alternative energy at the old landfill. He also met with the President of Isothermal Community College to acquaint himself with the college and staff. Mr. Classen and

Paula Roach met with Jimmy Hines, Director of the Rutherford-Polk McDowell Health Department and staff to discuss upcoming budget expenditures. Other items on his agenda was a meeting with the Cliffside Sanitary District, attending the WAVE breakfast hosted by a Lake Lure civic group, meeting with Airport Authority and Building Inspections Staff, and meeting the new District Manager for the State Cooperative Extension. Mr. Classen also attended a Queens Gap meeting and a NC DOT Public Hearing pertaining to Hicks Grove Road. We want to welcome Mrs. Classen and daughter as they are here visiting this weekend.

Economic Development:

EDC continues to work on several projects that have great potential as well as existing projects. The EDC staff attended a DOT meeting regarding Horsehead Corporation held at Chase High School, as well as, a Hicks Grove Community meeting at Hicks Grove Baptist Church. Staff attended the SBA/SBTDC presentation "Doing Business with the Government" which was held at Isothermal Community College. A DukeNet representative shared information with EDC concerning bringing fiber in Rutherford County. NC Dept of Commerce Economic Development representative, Martyn Johnson and Duke Energy Economic Development Manager, Harry Poovey also stopped by the office this week.

Emergency Services/Emergency Management/Fire Marshal:

EMS Personnel responded to 182 calls. EMS Director and Operations Manager attended a budget meeting for the FY2012-2013 budget. The EMS Director also attended a meeting with Horsehead to discuss emergency preparedness and access during construction of the facility. The EMS staff provided student training at Rutherford Elementary School and conducted EMS Night Out Training for all emergency service personnel within the county to introduce new advancements and protocols in cardiac care. Lastly, EMS management continues to conduct employee interviews for vacant positions.

Finance:

The Finance Department continues to work closely with the County Manager on current projects. The Finance office continues to enter budget information and prepare reports. The Finance Director and Deputy Director attended a NCCNT training seminar in Morganton.

Human Resources:

The Human Resources Department continues to be available to assist employees with the SHP annual enrollment. The Human Resources Department met with new employees to complete their benefit package. Also, the Director attended the NC IPMA conference to learn of new changes and updates pertaining to HR law.

Information Resources:

IT staff have been installing a new check scanning hardware and software package for the Tax and Finance Offices. Some of the staff attended a webinar at IPDC presented by the School of Government regarding public record laws. IT staff continue to service the needs of all county departments.

Library:

The Rutherford County Library had a busy week between the grand opening of the Hub Teen Center and the Bright Star Touring theatre production of "Aesop's Fables". The production was held for elementary school children, preschool story time and for an Outreach Program at the Carver Center. Plans are being made to host future productions. (*See Special Highlights Section for pictures*)

Planning/Parks and Recreation:

Public Works & Planning has experienced a very busy week with multiple planning and land use inquiries along with many small tasks and work orders on the maintenance end of things. The Planning Director has been busy prioritizing building project requests for the next budget year. The staff conducted a mid-year inventory of garage parts and stock. The Public Works Director provided a brief report of County involvement at Cliffside park in addition to following up on the community work day at Cliffside's Honeysuckle Park. Staff coordinated another workday with the public along with utilizing county staff to help with improvements and ground keeping. Due to the weather, and awaiting new hires, the workload for grounds keeping is overwhelming, however, all staff have worked together to help mow and handle building repairs. Files and webpage for Greyrock have been updated. Also, staff researched Queens Gap files and plats along with

the County Manager and Attorney regarding upcoming mediation with Lexon Bond Company. Additionally, the Director participated in a meeting in Lake Lure regarding exotourism and outdoor recreation, followed up on rails to trails legal inquiries, gathered information regarding the Bechtler Site, and completed Biggerstaff NPS grant forms and phone correspondence.

Register of Deeds:

The Register of Deeds office had an active week with 201 transactions collecting \$18,380.

Senior Center:

The Senior Center has been busy this week. We have served 330 patrons for activities, including 260 for lunch. Two craft classes were held this week to make Easter items. Also, the seniors had a great time this week as they played chair volleyball. The Seniors also were invited to Chase High School for Senior Day. Lastly, the staff attended a first aid training course.

Social Services:

DSS continues to see an increase in the number of applicants in all public assistance programs. LIHEAP funds are still available to assist citizens with the cost of heating. These funds are paid directly to a vendor and can remain as a credit with the vendor if not used this year. A current crisis is not required for eligibility as long as the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. CIP funds are also available and an applicant must be experiencing a current heating or cooling crisis, as well as meet the eligibility criteria. The Food and Nutrition Services Unit completed its first full month of Task Management or Case Banking. Rather than managing a specific caseload of recipients and households, workers perform specific tasks relating to application processing and ongoing support across all cases. These tasks include handling walk-in consumers, taking all telephone calls to answer questions and document changes in household circumstances that effect eligibility, accepting new applications, and processing applications. Plans are to expand this approach to all public assistance services by the end of the year. At this point the approach seems to be on target to fulfill the goal of improving efficiency and to provide improved customer service. The Food and Nutrition Services consumers can now register to get their EBT card balance by text message. This is a six month pilot being conducted by NC DHHS. Recipients are responsible for registering for the service. The continuation of the pilot will depend on the usage by recipients and the cost effectiveness.

Family and Children's supervisory and management staff has been busy this week interviewing for two vacant Child Protective Service Social Worker Positions. Lastly, DSS will complete a three month customer satisfaction survey on March 31. The survey asks consumers questions to determine how satisfied they are with the treatment and service they received during their visit to the agency. The results will be used to identify needed areas for improvement and enhance customer service.

Soil and Water:

The Education Specialist presented the Envioscape lesson to four classes at Thomas Jefferson teaching the impact humans can have on land and showing how to protect our natural resources. Staff are continuing to work with Rutherfordton Elementary and Chase Middle on the Outdoor Environmental Learning Center grant projects. District Technician attended the Mountain Valley RC&D meeting. The technician consulted with a land owner and engineer on micro-irrigation and is preparing to complete spot checks. Staff continue to work on a solid waste lagoon closure, finalize details of a stream bank project, take new applications, and continues to inspect ongoing projects.

Solid Waste:

The Solid Waste Department served 369 customers and shipped out 35 loads of trash to Lenoir. The Solid Waste staff met with Carl Classen, David Garrett, Bill Eckler, and Dana Whitehair to discuss Transfer Station issues. Also, the core engineers should have their findings complete this week regarding the Transfer Station. The Solid Waste Director and three employees completed certification courses for transfer and landfill operations.

Tax:

The Appraisal Department received 354 new appeals bringing the total appeals received to 2504. The staff assisted one citizen with the Present Use Program, answered 88 phone calls, and mailed out 21 returns. Staff also mailed 487 informal appeal notices and 5 Board of Equalization and Review appeal forms. GIS/Mapping/Land Records/Addressing assisted 67 taxpayers, issued 17 pre-permits, and reviewed 11 plats. One project has been completed leaving 3 in progress. Land Records printed 35 newly recorded deeds, transferred 63 deeds, transferred 3 by will or estate and set up 38 new accounts. GIS completed 5 splits, 2 merges, 5 acreage adjustments, and created 14 maps. The addressing department assigned 7 new addresses, updated 20 addresses, and installed 4 new road signs.

Tourism:

TDA held a marketing strategy and planning session for FY2012-13 covering all aspects of TDA's efforts. TDA staff have also been working diligently in preparation for the opening of two VIN sites, where TDA designed and provided hospitality training to volunteers for the Lake Lure Visitor Center. Staff attended an Eco-Tourism Summit in Lake Lure. In addition, staff secured media coverage for the Collegiate Community Triathlon being held in Lake Lure on March 31.

Transit:

This past week Transit drove 9,592 miles, transported 1,023 passengers and collected \$15,560 in revenue. There were no safety violations. The Transit Department continues to work with DSS to make new Medicaid transportation changes. The Director began the process for state procurement of new vehicle radios to tie into the Viper Tower which will eliminate monthly transmission costs of \$250 per month.

Veterans Office:

The staff made 158 veteran contacts this week. They also had 95 telephone interviews, with 58 mail-outs for veterans to complete documents and requests for service. The Veterans Office also assisted two families with food this week.

Special Recognition Highlights



Bright Star Touring theatre production of "Aesop's Fables". Rutherford County Library.



Grand Opening of the Hub Teen Center--Library